

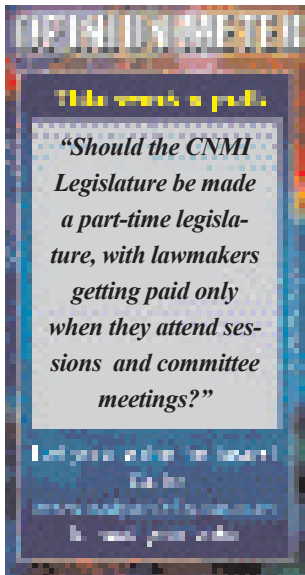
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INSIDE



GOP Congress

Republicans tightened their grip on the Senate early Wednesday, capturing a string of Democratic seats across the South. Democratic leader Tom Daschle struggled for political survival in South Dakota.

Page 2



Car Bomb

Car bombs killed at least a dozen people in Baghdad and another major city Tuesday as pressure mounted on interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi to avert a full-scale U.S. attack on the insurgent stronghold Fallujah.

Page 17

Race may come down to Ohio



President Bush supporters wave flags during an election rally early Wednesday, Nov. 3, 2004, at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington.

By RON FOURNIER
AP POLITICAL WRITER



WASHINGTON (AP)—President George W. Bush prepared to declare re-election victory in the wee hours of Wednesday and Democratic rival John Kerry refused to concede as results in the key state of Ohio remained uncertain.

"We will fight for every vote," said Kerry running mate John Edwards.

After winning Nevada and pulling within 16 electoral votes of the 270 required for a second term, Bush was laying claim to Ohio's 20 electoral votes over Kerry's objections. "We will not base our decision on a concession," said Bush adviser Dan Bartlett.

The Electoral College count was excruciating: With 270 votes needed to win, Bush won 28 states for 254 votes. Kerry won 20 states plus the District of Columbia for 252 votes.

Ceding nothing, Kerry dispatched running mate John Edwards to tell supporters in Boston: "We've waited four years for this victory. We can wait one more night."

The 78-word statement was an eerie echo of 2000 when advisers to both Bush

2004 not a breakout for youth after all

WASHINGTON (AP)—This was not the breakout year for young voters that some had anticipated. Fewer than one in 10 voters Tuesday were 18 to 24, about the same proportion of the electorate as in 2000, exit polls indicated. Still, with voter turnout expected to be higher overall, more young people appeared to have come out.

A vigorous push on college campuses by both parties and national mobilization drives had raised expectations that 2004 would be the year of the youth vote.

Exit polls indicated that young

people who did vote were strongly supporting Democrat John Kerry over President Bush, while they were evenly split between Bush and Democrat Al Gore four years ago.

The exit polls were conducted for The Associated Press by Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International.

First-time voters made up about 10 percent of the electorate, about the same as in 2000, and they favored Kerry. Four years ago, the group leaned toward Gore.

The economy and moral values were the top issues for young voters,

Inside the Bush campaign, an intense debate waged into the wee hours as some aides said parachuting teams into Ohio would ensure a political stalemate in a state Bush believes he has already won.

Bush won Florida this time without a recount. Kerry took New Hampshire from Bush, who won it in 2000, but the state has just four electoral votes. That leaves Ohio and Nevada as Kerry's only hopes, and he wasn't conceding either.

"The vote count in Ohio has not been completed," said Kerry campaign manager Mary Beth Cahill. "There are more than 250,000 remaining votes to be counted. We believe when they are, John

with about one-fifth of those surveyed choosing each. Young people concerned about moral values strongly supported Bush, while those interested in the economy and jobs chose Kerry.

Iraq and terrorism were next on the list - with Kerry winning the Iraq vote and Bush taking the terrorism group.

"It's definitely the war," said Eliana Deutsch, 20, of San Diego, explaining why she came out. "People see these soldiers who are 18 and don't have an education, and they're over there dying."

See 2004 NOT on Page 12

It's really sad that that (the military) is Kerry will win Ohio.

Not so, according to Bush's advisers who told the president he would capture the state.

"I believe I will win, thank you very much," Bush said while awaiting results with his family and dog Barney.

In the early hours of Wednesday, Kerry was still on the hunt for electoral votes the Republicans won four years ago. The states' won by Democrat Al Gore in 2000 are worth just 260 votes this year due to redistricting—10 short of the coveted number.

See RACE on Page 12

and Democrat Al Gore told supporters that the race was too close to call—setting off a 36-day recount.

"We will fight for every vote," Edwards said, borrowing a line from Gore.

CURRENT RESULTS		
President	Bush	Kerry
Electoral	254	252
States Won	28	20
Vote%	51	48
Votes	56,522,232	52,798,768
AS OF 8:34PM SAIPAN TIME		

Election Day 2004

Republicans retain control of US Senate

By DAVID ESPO
AP SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON (AP)—Republicans tightened their grip on the Senate early Wednesday, capturing a string of Democratic seats across the South. Democratic leader Tom Daschle struggled for political survival in South Dakota.

Illinois State Sen. Barack Obama, a Democratic political star in the making, easily won a seat formerly in Republican

Illinois U.S. Senator-elect Barack Obama, with his wife Michelle looking on, acknowledges applause from supporters during his acceptance speech in Chicago, Tuesday, Nov. 2, 2004. Obama, only the fifth black U.S. Senator to be elected in history, defeated Republican Alan Keyes in the nation's first Senate race with two black major-party candidates.

AP



Republicans extend decade of House control

By ALAN FRAM
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—Republicans extended their decade-long hold on the House of Representatives for another two years, knocking off four veteran Texas Democrats along the way. Among their few setbacks was the defeat of the longest serving Republican member of the chamber, Rep. Phil Crane.

By winning their 218th seat—with several more likely to come—Republicans were

set to control the House for a dozen consecutive years, the first time they have achieved that feat since the 12 years that ended in January 1933. With the Republicans also renewing their majority in the Senate, the party was assured of reigning over Congress, though with narrow majorities that should allow Democrats to slow and even derail some Republican initiatives.

Even so, Republican leaders were jubilant.

“We are going to be the ma-

jority party in the 109th Congress. I’ve got 218 booked and there’s a lot more around the country that has not been decided yet,” said Rep. Thomas Reynolds of New York, who heads the House Republicans’ campaign operation.

By early morning Wednesday in the East, Republicans had won 218 seats and were leading in 14 others, which could give them at least 232 seats, 14 more than the majority needed for House control. Democrats had 190 seats and led in 10.

hands in Illinois, and will be the only black among 100 senators when the new Congress convenes in January. “I am fired up,” he told cheering supporters in Illinois.

But the Republicans did most of the celebrating by far, capturing Democratic open seats in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Louisiana—where Rep. David Vitter became the first Republican since Reconstruction to win a term in the Senate.

“We ran as a team,” said Sen. George Allen of Virginia, chairman of the Republican senatorial committee. He referred to Republicans who ran for open seats across the South and West, campaigning as allies of President George W. Bush in states where Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry had little or no campaign presence.

“It looks like we’re going to have a much strengthened Republican majority,” Allen predicted.

Exactly how much depended on the outcome of races still unsettled in Florida, Colorado, Alaska and South Dakota.

Shortly after midnight in the East, Republicans were assured of 52 seats, one more than they control in the current Congress.

The Republican march through the South began in Georgia—and spread in several directions at once.

Rep. Johnny Isakson claimed Georgia for the Republicans, and Rep. Jim DeMint took South Carolina. Rep. Richard Burr soon followed suit in North Carolina. Vitter made it four for four when he captured a seat in Louisiana—avoiding a runoff by winning more than 50 percent of the vote.

In each case, Democratic retirements induced ambitious lawmakers to give up safe House seats to risk a run for the Senate.

In Florida, former Housing and Urban Development Secretary Mel Martinez held a narrow lead over Betty Castor, a former state education commissioner, with votes counted in more than 90 percent of the precincts.

Republicans also held fast in Oklahoma, where long-term Republican Sen. Don Nickles retired. Former Rep. Tom Coburn prevailed there, despite early campaign stumbles that sent the party to his rescue with a televised attack on his Democratic challenger.

In many races with no incumbents on the ballot, Democrats ran as conservatives in hopes of separating themselves from Kerry in their conservative states.

Interviews with voters leaving their polling places underscored the flaw in the strategy.

In North Carolina, Burr gained the votes of nearly nine in 10 of Bush’s supporters. Vitter’s level of support was nearly as high in Louisiana, as was DeMint’s in South Carolina.

Daschle and former Rep. John Thune were in an impossibly close race with votes counted in one-third of their sparsely populated state—separated by fewer than 1,000 votes. Theirs was a campaign on which the two men spent \$26 million (€20.46 million)—an estimated \$50 (€39) for each registered voter.

After a particularly caustic campaign, Bunning, 73, a former major league baseball pitcher, fell behind Democrat Dan Mongiardo, a surgeon, early in the evening in Kentucky before moving ahead. With votes counted in all but three of the state’s 3,482 precincts, he led 50.5 to 49.5—a margin of fewer than 20,000 votes out of 1.7 million cast.

Obama, 43, the son of a black man from Kenya and a white

woman from Kansas, had no difficulty dispatching Alan Keyes, a black conservative whose outspoken views against abortion and homosexuality earned the disdain from some members of his own party.

Even so, the Democratic state legislator’s victory in a race to replace Republican Sen. Peter Fitzgerald capped a remarkable rise. He first gained national prominence this summer when his party’s presidential candidate, Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts, tapped him to deliver the keynote address at the Democratic National Convention.

Isakson, who replaced former House Speaker Newt Gingrich in Congress in 1999, coasted to victory in Georgia. He triumphed over Rep. Denise Majette in a campaign to replace Sen. Zell Miller—a Democrat who crossed party lines to deliver a memorably anti-Kerry speech at the Republican National Convention.

Burr triumphed over Erskine Bowles in North Carolina, who was making his second try for the Senate in two years after a turn as President Bill Clinton’s chief of staff. Burr made much of his rival’s resume—in a state that Bush carried handily even though democratic running mate John Edwards has held the seat for six years.

In next-door South Carolina, DeMint held off a challenge from Inez Tenenbaum, the state education superintendent. She stumbled early, then found her campaign legs with an attack on DeMint’s support for a national sales tax. He battled back, though, and won handily in a state that Bush was carrying, as well.

Republicans who won new terms included Sens. Richard

See REPUBLICANS on Page 3

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Island Snapshots

The Saipan Tribune accepts contributed photos of birthdays, weddings, baptisms, and other community and family events for free publication. Material submitted should be original and not copyrighted, in digital or print format. Must include a caption containing complete details in description of the event, location of the persons in the photos, the date, and the place, the name of the contributor, and a contact number. The Saipan Tribune reserves the right to edit the caption, the date of publication and the date of the picture. Contributors are e-mail their submissions to: editor@saipantribune.com. To check if contributions are received, call 223-6207, 223-3446, or 223-8743.

World drawn into US race with intensity

By WILLIAM FOREMAN
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—People around the globe were glued to radios and televisions Wednesday as results rolled in from a U.S. presidential election many thought could rattle their stock markets, rock their economies and shake up a world already wracked by war.

Giant TV screens in coffee shops, malls and train stations across Asia flashed the numbers of counted votes and showed maps of where polls had closed. Pundits debated the outcome and its possible effect on their own countries.

Anxious Malaysian investors monitored CNN on a television placed beside share price monitors at the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange.

“Our market always mimics the U.S. one. If that one goes

down, ours will too,” said Wong Siak Voon, a 72-year-old retiree who was hoping the Democrats’ John Kerry would beat the incumbent Republican George Bush. “Bush is a troublemaker. Look at all the damage he’s done. Bring him down!”

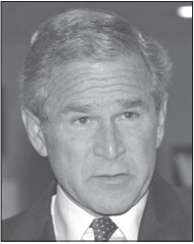
The election stirred big interest in Pakistan, where despite the government’s close support of Bush’s war on terror, most people were eager to see him voted out of office.

“I just hate him. I just hate his face,” said Mehtab Butt, a 50-year-old market trader in the eastern city of Lahore, said about Bush.

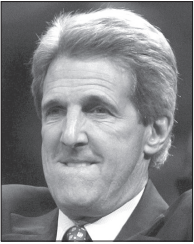
“The U.S. voters have seen the violations of human rights in Iraq and Afghanistan,” he said.

But Arif Mahmood Khan, 36, a Lahore carpet dealer, believed Bush was better. “The world, after all, needs him. People need him to fight terrorism,” he said.

Bush appeared to have plenty of other supporters in parts of Asia—like South Korea and Taiwan—that have close defense ties



Bush



Kerry

“The United States has a lot of problems these days, in terms of the war in Iraq and the economy,” said Kim Han-joon, 32, who favored the Democratic challenger. “Things need to be changed to some degree. I don’t think Bush can do that.”

Taiwan has long had a friendly relationship with the United States—the island’s likely bodyguard if China ever attacks. The Asian rivals split amid civil war in 1949, and Beijing says Taiwan must join the mainland eventually or face war.

Taiwanese cable TV networks devoted most of their morning broadcasts to the U.S. election, including a running vote count and elaborate maps that showed which states were supporting which candidate.

Allen Lo, 40, an attorney in the capital, Taipei, supported Bush. “Bush has been the best

for Taiwan,” he said. “Kerry would be like the Democrats of the past, less positive.”

In China, 30-year-old Jin Xin liked Kerry and thought Bush was a warmonger.

“I think Kerry will improve China-U.S. relations. The two biggest issues are Taiwan and the economy. China wants the U.S. to admit that Taiwan is part of China,” said Jin, a sound technician in Beijing.

Interest in the elections was high in Indonesia—the world’s most populous Muslim nation—where there is widespread anger at Bush over the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. But there was little communal viewing of the results, which were only screened on cable and satellite stations. Cafes and restaurants were closed because of the Islamic fasting month.

Budiman Sudjatmiko, a democracy activist, watched the results come in at the U.S. Em-

bassy in Jakarta. He grimaced as Florida was called for Bush.

“This is so nerve wracking. It’s like voting for the president of the world,” he said, biting his nails. “If Kerry wins, I am going to have a big party.”

None of the big TV screens in Tokyo’s glitzy Ginza district carried footage from the election. The news focused on a Japanese hostage killed in Iraq and the aftermath of a major earthquake in northern Japan.

REPUBLICANS

From Page 2

Shelby of Alabama, Kit Bond of Missouri, Judd Gregg of New Hampshire, George Voinovich of Ohio, Sam Brownback of Kansas, Robert Bennett of Utah, Charles Grassley of Iowa, Mike Crapo of Idaho, John McCain of Arizona and Specter.

Among Democratic incum-

bents, Sens. Patrick Leahy of Vermont, Christopher Dodd of Connecticut, Barbara Mikulski of Maryland, Evan Bayh of Indiana, Blanche Lincoln of Arkansas, Byron Dorgan of North Dakota, Russell Feingold of Wisconsin, Charles Schumer of New York, Harry Reid of Nevada, Patty Murray of Washington, Barbara Boxer of California, Ron Wyden of

Oregon and Daniel Inouye of Hawaii won new terms.

In all, there were 34 seats on the ballot, 19 held by Democrats and 15 by Republicans.

From the beginning, retirements framed the campaign, consigning Democrats to underdog status.

Sens. Hollings in South Carolina, Graham in Florida, John Breaux in Louisiana and

Edwards in North Carolina all decided against seeking new terms, joining Miller in voluntary retirement. Republicans instantly became competitive in each race as relatively junior members of the House decided to give up safe seats to run.

Republican Sen. Don Nickles also retired in Oklahoma and Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell followed suit in

Colorado, and Democrats quickly produced strong challengers in those states, too.

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COMMUNITY

Briefs

OWWA Health Screening Program for OFWS

The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration is reminding the Filipino community of the Health Screening Program to be conducted this Nov. 7, 2004, 9am to 12noon, at the Nauru Building, Susupe. We would like to advise the members of the Filipino community who wish to be tested for blood sugar levels to fast (no food or water) from midnight of Nov. 6, 2004 up to the time of testing.

Families with disabilities officers' meeting today

The CNMI Association of Families with Disabilities meeting will be held today, Nov. 4, 2004, 10am, at Skyway Restaurant, Airport Road. Should you have any questions, call Lisa A. Aldan at 483-0395 or Vicky Tudela at 288-7676. All parents and community members may attend this meeting.

Marriage Encounter weekend set

The Worldwide Marriage Encounter Organization has announced the upcoming ME Weekend scheduled from Nov. 19 though 21 for married couples who want to improve communication and strengthen their marriage.

The weekend is open to all married couples regardless of age. The special weekend will be held at the Hotel Rivera Saipan in Fina Sisú. The registration fee is only \$50 per couple and includes room for the weekend, all meals and drinks.

The organization explained that the weekend is intended to focus "on your relationship between you and your spouse and on your relationship with God.

For registration or more information, contact Ben & Lovey Salas at 235-2250; Russ & Kanae Quinn at 256-1058 or Sean & Ericka Frink at 322-9990.

OES PTSA meeting set

The PTSA Officers of Oleai Elementary School would like to inform the parents and guardians of Oleai Elementary School that the PTSA meeting will be on Tuesday, Nov. 9, 6pm, in the school cafeteria. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

MHS MY WAVEs solicit help from alumni

The Marianas High School's MY WAVE club is soliciting help from all MHA alumni.

"We are requesting your help in donating novels, fiction books and magazines," the group said in a statement.

Those who would like to make a donation or want more information may contact club adviser Tim Faska at 287-7550 or mhsmy-wave_2005@hotmail.com

Learn to scuba dive for free

The Youth Alliance Dive Program announced that it is currently accepting applications for its Fall Open Water Dive Program.

Bartenders' competition set

The Northern Marianas Bartenders Association will be hosting another cocktail competition dubbed the Bartender Cocktail Competition Grand Marnier Challenge on Nov. 9, 2004 at the Madonna Disco of the Saipan Grand Hotel.

NMBA president Lito Espino said the event will have an entrance fee of \$10 per participant.

The competition, slated to begin at 8:30pm, includes over \$400 in total cash prizes, to go along with other prizes for winners.

Espino said each company will be limited to two representatives in the competition. Presentations will be judged 20 percent on originality, 30 percent on taste, 30 percent on showmanship, 10 percent on neatness, and 10 percent on audience impact.

The champion will receive \$150 plus a round trip from Saipan to Manila and a cellular phone, while first and second runners up will receive \$100 and \$50. Best in Show earns \$100 plus a cellular phone.

For more information, contact Espino at 286-9982 or email nmba_saipan@yahoo.com. (Shan Seman)

Wanted: designated drivers

The Department of Public Safety Traffic Section will again implement its Designated Driver program this December to promote road safety during the holiday season.

The program provides transportation for intoxicated individuals. Instead of driving while intoxicated, individuals may contact the Traffic Section and a driver will be provided for transportation home.

Those interested in taking part in the program are encouraged to contact Rose Ada-Hocog or Sgt. Sylvan Rangamar at 664-9084/5/6.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE JAN 04 - NOVEMBER 4, 2004											
DEPARTURES						ARRIVALS					
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CG 860	07:00	07:00	07:00	07:00	07:00	CG 860	17:00	17:00	17:00	17:00	17:00
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Guam casino initiative’s defeat ‘good’ for CNMI

By **LIBERTY DONES**
REPORTER

The defeat of the casino initiative on Guam is a good development for the CNMI tourism-wise, according to the House leadership.

“It’s positive. It’s a positive development because, had it been passed, it would have given Guam an edge, a greater advantage [over the CNMI] in terms of competition in the tourism market,” said House leadership spokesman Charles Reyes Jr.

Alleged ex-Abu Sayyaf member nabbed for assault

By **JOHN RAVELO**
REPORTER

An alleged ex-member of the Philippine terrorist group Abu Sayyaf fell into the hands of authorities after assault and battery and criminal contempt charges were filed against him.

The allegation that Roger Samortin Castillo was formerly affiliated with the Abu Sayyaf cropped up in his ex-lover’s statement to investigators. The woman also told police that the 47-year-old Castillo is affiliated with a special unit in the Philippine military.

In an affidavit, police detective Christopher Leon Guerrero charged Castillo with criminal contempt, assault and battery and disturbing the peace.

The incident allegedly happened last Oct. 27 inside the courtroom of Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth Govendo.

Police said that Castillo, who resides in Chinatown, was in court in connection with a petition by the woman for a restraining order. The woman reportedly claimed that Castillo previously threatened her several times, telling her that he would kill her if she leaves him and have another boyfriend.

After the woman finished her testimony, the judge asked her to step down and called Castillo to the witness stand.

Police said that, when they came close to each other, Castillo elbowed the woman, struck her arm and uttered an invective at her. Police said the woman became scared at the dirty look Castillo threw her.

The woman felt that Castillo is capable of harming her because of his military and Abu Sayyaf background, the detective said.

Associate Judge David Wiseman upheld that Castillo probably committed the crimes he was being accused of. The judge imposed a \$5,000-bail for Castillo’s temporary release.

The judge also ordered Castillo to surrender his travel documents and that he be temporarily banned from leaving Saipan.

He said, “we were worried because Guam would be more attractive to some tourists.”

Earlier, Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino general manager Tom Liu said that Saipan may be pressured to pass its own casino gaming law if voters approve the initiative to legalize controlled casino gambling on Guam.

Liu said, though, that a casino industry on Guam would not have a major impact on Tinian’s casino operations, noting that TDHC targets the Chinese tourists who could

not visit and gamble on Guam without a U.S. visa.

Tinian’s advantage over Guam lies on the CNMI’s more relaxed immigration policy, as well as its direct charter flights from China, he said.

In the meantime, Saipan casino proponent former Gov. Froilan Tenorio said yesterday the Guam initiative rejection would have “no impact or very little impact, if any, on the Northern Marianas.”

“I expected that the people of Guam would reject the casino initiative because there’s

lot of opposition there, unlike here,” he said.

Tenorio said that what he is proposing on Saipan is an enactment of a casino law, not an initiative.

He said he has already given a draft law to the House speaker and every member of the House of Representatives. No lawmaker has introduced the proposal yet.

“I’m not saying that casino is the only way to generate revenues but if we see a need for it, why not do it here? We see that this administration can’t pay for

utilities, is way behind the payment for Retirement Fund, behind in giving out rebate checks. There is no excuse to this. This government is bankrupt. We have to look at other revenues and casino is one,” he said.

Saipan Sen. Thomas P. Vilagomez said a casino should not be legislated but decided by voters. “The people should decide. I don’t think that we should pass a bill for casino. I feel that even the investors would hesitate if it’s only through a public law, which can be changed after a year.

The only people willing to agree to a public law are those fly-by-night casinos,” he said.

Saipan Sen. Luis Crisostimo said the casino initiative’s defeat on Guam “is good for Tinian.” “It would keep Tinian customers,” he said, adding that, like Guam, people on Saipan would also oppose a casino.

Proposition A, introduced by a group called Citizens for Economic Diversity, wanted to create a Guam Casino Gaming Control Commission, and limit casino operations to hotels with 100 or more rooms.

Direct Saipan-Taiwan flight takes off in maiden voyage

By **AGNES E. DONATO**
REPORTER

Local officials hailed Continental Micronesia’s new nonstop service between Saipan and Taipei yesterday, hoping that the flights will bring more Taiwanese tourists to the Northern Marianas.

Continental made its maiden flight from Saipan to Taipei at 6:35pm yesterday. The carrier will be flying the route every Wednesday and Saturday using a next-generation Boeing 737-800, providing Saipan with 189 additional seats on each flight.

In a ribbon-cutting ceremony before the flight departure, CNMI government officials expressed

gratefulness to Continental for providing the new service.

Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente said the additional direct flight sends a positive signal for tourism and the travel industry in both overseas and the CNMI.

“As you know, Taipei is a developing market for the CNMI. We hope to see more people from Taipei visiting us and getting to know and appreciate our islands and our people,” Benavente said. “The CNMI government, together with the Marianas Visitors Authority, is ready to provide all necessary support to ensure that this new direct flight from Taipei to Saipan will be a success.”

Benavente also cited gov-

ernment efforts to improve the islands as a tourist destination. He said the new pedestrian mall in Garapan will have its official opening next week and the new Visitors Center in American Memorial Park is due to open next spring.

MVA chair David Sablan, who joined Continental officials in a press conference in Taipei last month, said he was impressed by the airline’s commitment to promote tourism to the Marianas.

Sablan projected that the non-stop service would bring in about 900 additional tourists to Saipan every month. “We hope you continue this route in years to come,” he told Continental officials.

nonstop flights to previously unserved markets. “We’ll continue to figure out ways to make it cost-effective for you to bring passengers over,” he said.

Further, Salas said CPA is working on several improvements to the Saipan International Airport. Some of the projects he mentioned are the roof replacement, enclosure and air-conditioning of the departure terminal, and repair of the 25-year-old runway.

Continental flight 921 will depart Saipan at 6:35pm, with an estimated time of arrival of 8:35pm on Taipei. From Taipei, Continental flight 922 will depart at 10:35pm and arrive on Saipan at 5:15am.

ACE
+RED

High Court upholds congressman's conviction

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

The Supreme Court yesterday affirmed the conviction of House Rep. Norman Palacios for touching a woman's private part at a Tinian bar nearly three years ago.

However, while the High Court, as a collegial body, agreed with the trial court's determination that Palacios was guilty of assault and battery, the justices were split in their opinion. The Superior Court had also convicted Palacios on a charge of disturbing the peace.

Associate Justices Alexandro Castro and John Manglona affirmed the conviction for the High Court, while Chief Justice Miguel S. Demapan dissented.

"The defendant argues that because the brief sexual touching actually hurt the victim and did not arouse or gratify other party, there can be no assault and battery by sexual conduct," the Supreme Court said in a 14-page judgment.

"It tortures logic to accept the theory that the Legislature intended that those persons who deliberately violate the most intimate physical areas of

another person, and happen to inflict pain on that individual, would fall outside the scope of the sexual contact language," the judgment stated.

The High Court said that evidence showed that Palacios' action was for the purpose of sexual gratification, saying that individuals do not routinely go around touching the private parts of hostesses that greet them at dining establishments.

Demapan, however, disagreed with the majority opinion, saying that "evidence is not there to satisfy the requirement...[of] sexual arousal or

gratification." He said the case should be remanded to the trial court for resentencing.

Palacios had argued that touching the woman for "less than a second" does not conclusively establish that the action was intended to gratify sexual desire.

His lawyers had said that the intention for sexual gratification is an essential requisite to establish sexual contact as defined by the Commonwealth Code. The code penalizes sexual contact with another without the latter's consent. The felony falls under the scope of assault and battery.

Court records showed that Palacios touched the private parts of a waitress at the Port of Call Bar on Tinian sometime in November 2001, after the woman greeted the congressman and other guests as part of her job. Palacios touched the woman when she went to his right side.

"Defendant then walked in front of her and reached down with his right hand and placed the top half of the palm side of his hand on her [private parts]. He touched her hard and removed his hand within seconds. He then proceeded to his table

and sat down beside his guests," the Supreme Court noted.

It noted that the incident offended the victim, who became visibly shaken and was crying right after it happened. She immediately called her relatives for help, who responded and accompanied her to the police.

Although the maximum prison term for conviction on assault and battery for non-consensual sexual contact is one year, Palacios was placed under probation and was tasked by the trial court to perform 100 hours of community service as part of its conditions.

Chamber re-elects Sablan for another term

Members of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce yesterday elected a new set of officers, re-installing Alex Sablan as its president.

Sablan ran unopposed for re-election. When businessman Joe Ayuyu, who presided over the elections, opened the floor for nomination, Marianas Visitors Authority chairman David Sablan moved to close the nomination process and was duly seconded.

Ayuyu asked scores of Chamber members for a show of hands as to who among them favored the re-election of Alex Sablan, to which the crowd replied "I" viva voce. No one responded when Ayuyu asked the crowd as to who among them opposed the Chamber

president's re-election.

"I'm happy that the membership elected me again for the plans that I have [made] for the year and I [intend] to continue with," the Alex Sablan said.

The election took place during the Chamber's membership meeting at the Hyatt Regency Saipan's SandCastle yesterday.

The Chamber also reelected Richard Pierce as vice president, who ran unopposed like Alex Sablan. Mike Johnson of Deloitte Touch & Tahmatsu also ran unopposed for the position of treasurer.

The Chamber conducted balloting for the position of secretary, with Triple J Motors general manager Jay Jones prevailing over Scott Norman of Calvary Christian Academy.

Five candidates slugged it out for three directorship seats, including Century Insurance president and MVA chair David Sablan, KCN/KZMI general manager Harry Blalock, Jim Arenovski of Delta Management Corp., Bob Hudkins of Hertz, and Leonard Sine of Sine and Muna. The first three won the polls through balloting. (John Ravelo)



Sablan



SHAN SEMAN

Participants in yesterday's 2nd Annual Youth Take-Over Day pose for a souvenir shot with Gov. Juan N. Babauta, center, and Special assistant for youth affairs Florence Kirby, leftmost.

187 students take over govt, private agencies

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

Students from six high schools on Saipan stepped into the shoes of professionals and officials yesterday, taking part in the 2nd Annual Youth Take-Over Day.

In all, about 187 students from Saipan Southern High School, Grace Christian Academy, Mt. Carmel School, Marianas Baptist Academy, Kagman High School, and Marianas High School experienced a day in the lives of officials and staff from government agencies and about 16 private firms, including the Office of the Governor, Senate, House of Representatives, and the Judiciary, among others.

Special assistant for youth affairs Florence Kirby, whose office organized the event, said that participants this year surpassed the number last year, crediting this to the increase in the number of participating agencies.

"This is the first time where the three branches of government got together and participated, as well as a lot of private businesses," she said. "It's a great experience for all the participants because the students got to experience first-hand and understand how things are being done."

Edwin Correa, a 17-year-old

student who spent his day as a job development specialist at the Workforce Investment Agency, echoed Kirby's comments, saying the experience enabled him to understand the responsibilities of various employees.

"We did a lot of phone calls on clients because I was a job development specialists," he said. "The job is extremely hard because they have to work with like 30 people a day, and I found that all this hard work has a lot of responsibilities, so I respect that. Also, it was fun to work with them."

Also sharing similar experiences was Lynette Quitano of Kagman High School, who spent her day as governor of the Commonwealth, attending various meetings as well as signing a bill, among others.

"I had to be at three meetings at one time," she said. "[But] it was really fun and there's a lot to do as governor."

Others were Manuel Borja, who served as Lt. Governor; Amanda Planas, Speaker of the House; Joyce Taman, Senate President; and Seong Huon Lee, Saipan Mayor.

"I just found out that the lieutenant governor is in charge of many different task forces and different groups organized to get tasks done, and today I was with Water Task Force, and they're

working on improving the water system here on island... It's really cool to see all these things happening," Borja said.

For his part, Marianas High School sophomore Kelvin Rodeo spent his day as a reporter for the Saipan Tribune.

"It was a great experience. I learned a lot of new things about the way a newspaper works, and I got to experience a day in the life of a newspaper reporter. I was enlightened," he said.

Also joining Rodeo at the Saipan Tribune were Roselle Calvo, Sherry Ann Songsong, and Roxy Teregeyo.

Kirby expressed her desire to increase participation of both students and host in next year's event.

"If we keep up with the good work and show our counterparts what we do and give that sense of responsibility of what we do, I'm sure the word will spread and more will join next year," she said. "Hopefully we'll get more for you to get to know how the private sector operates and how the government runs our island."

The event was originally set for last month, but was delayed due to academic tests administered by various schools. It was part of celebrations for October as CNMI Youth Month. (with Kelvin Rodeo, Youth Take-Over Day reporter)

century

Senate confirms Salas as Commerce Secretary

By **LIBERTY DONES**
REPORTER

With strong backing from individuals and administration lawmakers, former congressman Andrew S. Salas got a unanimous confirmation vote from the Senate yesterday as the new Commerce Secretary.

‘Local farmers missing out on business opportunities’

By **AGNES E. DONATO**
REPORTER

Local farmers are missing out on a lot of business opportunities due to lack of information, the Northern Marianas College-Cooperative Research, Extension & Education Services said yesterday.

In an interview, acting NMC-CREES associate director Edgar Cocker said the CNMI has a lot of agricultural products it can market. However, local residents have not been able to do so because they are not aware of the necessary procedures.

For instance, he said, about \$600,000 in revenue is wasted every year due to the Commonwealth’s failure to utilize the da’ok fruit, which is a good source of oil used for various cosmetic products.

“Da’ok oil is very popular in Europe. You can use it to make shampoo, liquid soap, skin lotion. Da’ok can be found in different part of the island because it grows well even on sand and salty water. But we are not able maximize our resources because nobody knows how to pick and process the da’ok fruit,” Cocker said.

A da’ok oil processing facility, including equipment for extraction, dehydration, pack-

Likewise, Salas speaking under oath, told the Senate that he had never been convicted of a crime as earlier alleged, following the Senate’s revelation that it had sought the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s assistance to look into Salas’ background, including a possible criminal record in California where he

aging and labeling, should require only between \$5,000 and \$6,000 to set up, Cocker said.

The current market value of da’ok oil is at \$17 per 1 fluid ounce.

Another potential business opportunity for farmers is the processing of juice, tea, or capsule from the noni fruit, a popular dietary supplement.

Cocker reported that NMC-CREES recently received an order from a China-based business, called Beijing Multibio Co. Ltd., for 600 bottles of noni juice, with 16 ounces each. However, the order cannot be met because there are not enough noni plantations in the Commonwealth.

Cocker said the noni tree yields immediate benefits, as it starts producing fruit six months after being planted. Further, the noni tree generates fruit all year round.

NMC-CREES is now growing noni seedlings, which will be distributed to local farmers.

Individuals interested in processing noni and da’ok may attend a free workshop sponsored by NMC-CREES and the Commonwealth Development Authority. The training will be held on Nov. 16 and 17 at the Kagman Community Center from 8:30am to 4:30pm.

had lived prior to moving back to Saipan about a decade ago.

Asked by Republican Sen. Thomas P. Villagomez whether he had been convicted of any crime in the CNMI and elsewhere, Salas said, “I had not been convicted of murder or anything.”

He said he has been waiting for the time to speak and clear the air about his background. Salas said that he has always been a law-abiding citizen and a hardworking person.

Coming to his defense during a public hearing yesterday morning at the Senate were Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Alex Sablan, Tinian resident Ray Sakisat, Customs director Jay Santos, and Republican congressmen Ray Tebuteb and Joseph Deleon Guerrero.

Also seen in the chamber were other members of the House of Representatives and several friends and relatives.

Sablan described Salas as an “aggressive and astute individual, pro-business, and [somebody] we’d like to use” to bring the CNMI economy up.

“We hope to meet with him frequently and productively. We’ve talked about several ideas. Mr. Salas wants to see fairness in the system,” said the chamber president.

Sakisat said he has known Salas since childhood and he could attest that “he’s never been a bad boy.”

“This is simple. Why make this very hard for this gentleman and intelligent person? He can do the job. He is able, he is

ready, and he is not afraid to undertake [things],” Sakisat said.

Santos said he is a personal friend of Salas and he knows that the former congressman is a good person.

Tebuteb said he has admired Salas’ tenacity. Negative reports about Salas, he said, are purely “an opinion, an allegation.”

Rep. Deleon Guerrero said Salas was one of the “progressive” legislators during the 13th Legislature. He praised Salas for his “honesty, integrity, and courage.”

“His honesty can be brutal. He tells you up front. He is a person who follows his conviction. He speaks out based on what he believes in, not because it would make him popular,” he said.

Senate minority leader Pete P. Reyes commented, “It’s hard

not to confirm you because you have a very strong backing.”

Reyes cited that Salas’ drug test result is negative and his resume was “very impressive.” Reyes also said that any background check on Salas should have been done when he was still a legislator.

Sen. Joseph Mendiola said he has been supportive of Salas’ confirmation from the beginning.

Sen. Luis Crisostimo, who raised a number of questions to get Salas’ opinion on issues, happily voted yes to the confirmation.

Gov. Juan N. Babauta appointed Salas in September to the post, which had been vacant since the transfer of then Commerce Secretary Fermin Atalig to the Department of Finance.

ENVIRONMENTAL CALENDAR

Mark your calendar!

On Nov. 19-20, representatives from The Nature Conservancy will be coming to Saipan to provide training for community organizations in effective management and to provide tips for financial success. There will also be a chance for community organizations to meet and greet, and form connections and partnerships. The training will be geared primarily toward organizations with environmental interests, but is open to all. This opportunity is funded in part by the Coastal Resources Management Office. More information will follow on the environment page next week.

Calendar of Events

Nov. 1-11 Recycling competition
Nov. 15 America Recycles Day event at transfer station
Nov. 19 – 20 Meeting and training for community organizations with The Nature Conservancy

Congratulations are in order!

Congratulations to the employees of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. lab, whose hard work over the past year paid off on Friday when officials from the Division of Environmental Quality re-certified the lab. The lab has been unable to carry out its own drinking water quality testing since last year, when certification was revoked. By updating standard operating procedures and undergoing a DEQ audit of its practices, the lab was able to achieve compliance with DEQ regulations, and can now continue testing and monitoring drinking water and source water islandwide. Good job CUC! (*Qamar Schuyler*)

SAIPANCELL
CMYK

112 workers demand wages from former employer

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

Over 100 alien workers turned up at the Department of Labor yesterday to seek right to transfer to new employers and to demand payment of wages.

The workers form barely a third of the 363 employees left without jobs after garment firm N.E.T. Corp. shut down in April.

In an interview, Labor hearing officer Herb Soll said most of the former N.E.T. Corp. employees have found new employers. However, at least 112 workers remain without a job and have pending wage claims.

Of the 112, only 29 have been able to appear before the hearing as of 12 noon. Most of

them were given memorandums to seek new employers within 45 days.

Soll asked the next 34 workers on the list to come back for the continuation of the hearing yesterday afternoon. The rest will have a chance to voice their concerns on Friday.

According to Soll, initial reports showed the 112 workers had combined claims amounting \$110,000 but N.E.T. Corp. has already made partial payment to the workers, leaving a total balance of about \$35,000.

“The company has indicated they will pay [the balance] starting next week. Naturally, they have to pay before we will release them of obligation,” Soll said.



Perry Lo, a Chinese/English translator for the Department of Labor, is surrounded by former N.E.T. Corp. employees outside the Labor Hearing Office Wednesday.

Ye Ming Li, one of the workers present for the hearing, said he and his co-workers were not given notice of the company’s closure. He said that before the shutdown, the business owners called for a meeting and told the workers that they will be transferred to another garment factory. He said they were given the impression that they would be transferred permanently.

But when they moved to the new company, they were informed that they could only work under a temporary work authorization, which is renewable every three months.

Ye Ming Li, a mechanic, said he has worked for an electronics store since N.E.T. Corp.’s closure. He is currently out of work, as his TWA renewal application is still pending at the Labor Department.

“It is very hard to find a job, especially for my co-workers. Most of us are Chinese; very few speak English,” Ye Ming Li noted.

Aside from unpaid wages, N.E.T. Corp. owners also owe cash that they borrowed from some of the workers, Ye Ming Li said.

He related that before closing the business and leaving the island, the wife of owner Li Kow Wing approached some of the employees and asked them for money.

“They said they needed the money to pay the workers. They said we should lend them money if we don’t want the company to close,” said Ye Ming Li, who claimed he is owed \$7,500 by the company owners.

He said he knows at least two other persons who are owed \$12,500 and \$10,000, respectively. He said one of the two workers even contemplated killing herself over the debt, as the money constituted her savings for the several years she worked on Saipan. Unemployed and without any money, she had no choice but to return to China, Ye Ming Li said.

“It’s really unfair,” he said.

Security guard lands in jail for alleged sexual assault

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

Police took into custody a security guard Tuesday night for allegedly assaulting a woman while conducting a body search, according to the Department of Public Safety.

Police report indicated that the suspect, 33-year-old Nazrul Islam, a security guard at the MGM Barracks at the time of the incident, was arrested and charged for allegedly sexually assaulting the 23-year-old woman.

Investigation showed that the victim had gone to the barracks to visit a friend. At the gate, the woman met the suspect, who escorted her to the guardhouse, where he searched her handbag.

“When he was done he turned to [the victim] and [patted her down],” the report said. “During this search, [the

victim] stated that the guard touched her breast.”

Humiliated and embarrassed, the victim left the vicinity, walked to a nearby store, and called a male friend to report the incident. Her friend, 26-year-old Ligang Tang, then reported the incident to DPS at about 10:47pm.

According to the responding officer, the suspect was interviewed regarding the incident, which he reportedly denied.

“When I asked him if he touched her breasts, he hesitated and then later denied touching her, saying no,” the report said. “At this time, [the victim] started crying again with her shoulders shaking and said something to Mr. Tang [who] informed me that the guard did touch her breasts.”

The officer then arrested Islam at about 11:21pm. *(with Kelvin Rodeo, Youth Take-Over Day reporter)*

CTSI CITIZEN

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Opinion

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

By RIK and JANEL VILLEGAS

Rik is a business instructor at NMC and Janel is the owner of Positively Outrageous Results. They have consulted with over 400 businesses in 40 different industries. For better business results go to BizResults.biz to read previous articles.



Letters to the Editor

Saipan Tribune welcomes contributions. All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name, address and, if possible, fax or telephone number. Letters are edited for space, clarity and fairness.

Miss NMI World confirmed to leave for China

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

The Northern Marianas Beauty Pageant Association managed to secure enough funds yesterday to enable Miss NMI World 2004 Tracy Del Rosario to compete in this year's 54th Miss World contest in Sanya, southern China.

NMBPA president Bill Bezzant scotched reports that 20-year-old Del Rosario would not be able to participate in the pageant, saying in an interview yesterday that the Office of

House Speaker Benigno R. Fitial, as well as the Marianas Visitors Authority and other private firms have confirmed helping them with funds.

"Funding is always difficult, and just [yesterday] we were able get funding. Everything came through," he said.

Bezzant said Del Rosario was originally scheduled to leave for the pageant today; however, because of the late infusion of funds, her departure would be at a later date.

According to Carmen Sablan of NMBPA, Del Rosario's departure

would be sometime next week.

While in Sanya, Del Rosario would engage in various pre-pageant activities leading up to the pageant itself, which is scheduled to unfold on Dec. 4.

The 2004 Miss World would have participants from about 120 countries, and is second to the Olympics in terms of participation of nations. Last year, about 162 nations viewed the event with an audience of about 2.3 billion people.

Also, a new addition to the competition was recently announced: the first ever world vote to decide the winner.

Television voting will take place during an eight-day period, beginning on Nov. 26 with votes via telephone or text, while other votes may be made through the Internet at www.missworld.tv, beginning Nov. 10. All countries have the opportunity to cast their votes

Del Rosario is currently a full-time Liberal Arts student at the Northern Marianas College and aspires to specialize in Special Education in the future. In addition to balancing her studies and job, Del Rosario is active

in the community service as an altar server for the San Antonio Church.

Del Rosario, daughter of Herbert and Rose Del Rosario, won the nod of the board of judges during the 2004 Miss Northern Marianas beauty pageant when she eloquently invited prospective investors to visit the CNMI to witness its unique culture.

Del Rosario bested seven other candidates during the three-and-a-half-hour annual competition. McDonald's Saipan and Agot Santos of Genoveva's Hair Power assisted her.

Senate approves hemodialysis bill

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

The Senate voted 8-1 yesterday in favor of the \$5.8 million reprogramming of funds for the completion of the hemodialysis center on Saipan.

The measure, House Bill 14-258, aims to shift \$5.8 million from the pending Kagman wastewater project to complete the Public Health and Hemodialysis project.

The bill also transfers \$2 million from the Dandan sewer project or the expansion of the Agingan sewer treatment plant to the Kagman III road paving project.

Sen. Luis Crisostimo, who voted against the bill, said he could not agree to the use of funds that have already been allotted to another important project.

"I'm very disappointed. They made a mistake in passing it. We should come out with funds first. Why take it from a Precinct I project?" he asked.

Sen. Thomas Villagomez said there is a need to finish the hemodialysis project.

"Since Day 1, I wanted to have that passed and requested that the U.S. Inspector General conduct an audit of the [hemodialysis] project. We're still doing it. Sen. Pete Reyes and I talked about introducing a resolution to have the Inspector General get involved here," he said. "The primary concern now is to have it [hemodialysis project] done."

He said the Senate passed the bill with an amendment that essentially provides that the money cannot be used unless there is a bond.

Crisostimo said the bill also provides that no change order would be granted exceeding 10 percent of the \$5.8 million additional funds.

"But this is already a change order! It's going to be a change order of a change order," he said.

The hemodialysis project was originally appropriated \$11.8 million in federal funds. The winning bid for the construction of the project only amounted to \$5.6 million.

But officials from the Department Public Health and Public Works have

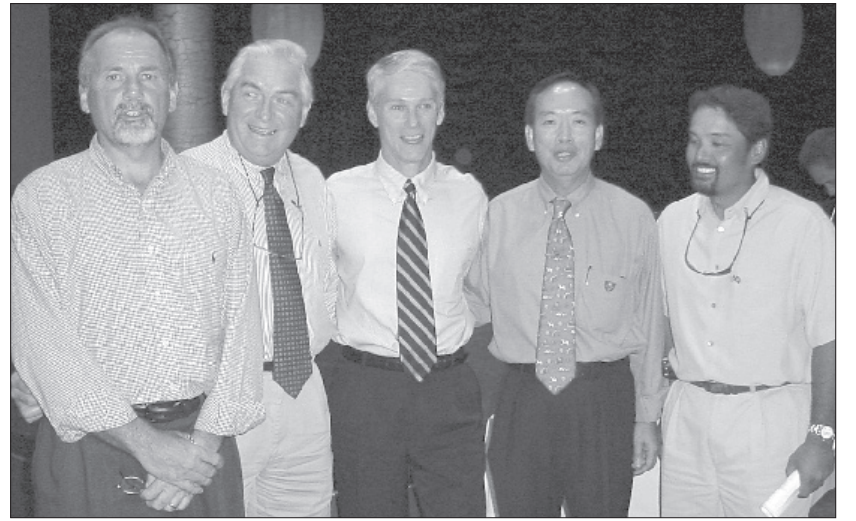
said that the original funds had been depleted mainly due to several change orders arising from faulty design work.

The House earlier approved H.B. 14-258, noting that using "idle" funds from the Kagman and Dandan projects would be good for the CNMI. It said that keeping the money unused jeopardizes future federal grant funding, noting that the Office of the Insular Affairs has instituted a policy conditioning future capital improvement grants on prompt expenditure and project completion.

"In addition, the [hemodialysis] construction is ongoing and the longer the delay of completion, the more costly it will be for the Commonwealth," the House bill reads.

The bill specifies that the Executive Branch shall reserve \$5.8 million from the 702 funding for FY 2007 to reinstate the amount reprogrammed from the Kagman wastewater project and Dandan sewer project.

The bill now goes back to the House for review.



JOHN RAVELO

PREDICTING THE WTO IMPACTS

Garment industry players spoke before local businessmen during yesterday's membership meeting of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce at the Hyatt's SandCastle, citing the need for Saipan manufacturers to remain competitive when the quota restrictions on apparel exported to the United States are lifted beginning Jan. 1, 2005. The guest speakers, Polo Ralph Lauren executive Doug Rogers, second left, Saipan Garment Manufacturers Association chairman James C. Lin, second right, and former CNMI Attorney General and special trade counsel Rexford Kosack, center, made elaborate discussions on the possible impacts of the lifting of quota restrictions on the local garment manufacturing industry and how other countries such as China could tremendously expand its market in the United States, the largest market for apparel. Photo also shows SGMA executive director Richard Pierce, left, and reelected Chamber president Alex Sablan.

RACE

From Page 1

Kerry could pick that up plus some in Ohio with 20 electoral votes. Without that state, he could only turn to Nevada (5 votes).

In Nevada, independent candidate Ralph Nader could play the spoiler.

A 269-269 tie would throw the presidential race to the House of Representatives.

Bush lost Pennsylvania, a major blow after courting voters with steel tariffs and 44 visits—the most of any state—in a bid to steal it from the Democrats. The loss raised the stakes in Ohio, won by Bush in 2000.

Alongside the White House and congressional races, a full roster of propositions and local offices kept voters busy. But all eyes were focused on Kerry's bid to make Bush the first president voted out of office in the midst of a war.

"I've given it my all," Bush said after voting in a firehouse at Crawford, Texas, hoping to avoid being the first wartime president bounced from office.

The race showed signs of being as

close as 2000, when Bush lost the popular vote to Gore but won the Electoral College count and the presidency after a ruling by the Supreme Court gave him Florida. The incumbent hoped to avoid the fate of his father—former President George H.W. Bush, who was bounced by voters in 1992 after waging war against Iraq and overseeing an ailing economy.

Braced for a replay of the 2000 recount, legions of lawyers and election-rights activists watched for signs of voter fraud or disenfranchisement. New lawsuits sought clearer standards to evaluate provisional ballots in Ohio and a longer deadline to count absentee ballots in Florida. Provisional ballots are cast by voters who come to the polls but find they are not listed on the rolls, or that their qualifications to vote are in question.

While complaints were widespread, they weren't significant. "So far, it's no big, but lots of littles," said elections expert Doug Chapin.

Voters were torn over the presidential race, in ways all too familiar.

Exit polls suggested that slightly more voters trusted Bush to handle terrorism than Kerry. A majority said the country was safer from terrorism than

four years ago, and they overwhelmingly backed Bush.

However, among those who said they were very worried about a terrorist strike, Kerry held a slight lead. That was a troubling sign for the incumbent as was this: A majority of voters said things were going poorly in Iraq, and they heavily favored Kerry.

With nearly 1 million jobs lost in Bush's term, Kerry was favored by eight of 10 voters who listed the economy as a top issue.

The nation's mood? There was division on that, too. Half said the country was headed in the right direction, a good sign for the incumbent.

Voters welcomed an end to the longest, most expensive presidential election on record. "It's the only way to make the ads stop," Amanda Karel, 25, said as she waited to vote at a banquet hall in Columbus, Ohio.

Both sides spent a combined \$600 million (€472 million) on TV and radio ads, more than twice the total from 2000.

Bush won among white men, voters with family incomes above \$100,000 (€78,000) and weekly churchgoers. Three-fourths of white voters who de-

scribed themselves as born-again Christians or evangelicals supported Bush. The president had hoped to increase his support among this group since 2000, but exit polls suggest there was little change.

Kerry retained Gore's margins among blacks and union households, key parts of the Democratic base. His voters named the economy and Iraq as top issues.

One in 10 voters were casting ballots for the first time and fewer than 10 percent were young voters, hardly the groundswell that experts had predicted. Kerry was favored by both groups, according to the surveys conducted for The Associated Press by Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International.

Officials predicted a turnout of 117.5 million to 121 million people, the most

ever and rivaling the 1960 election in the percentage of eligible voters going to the polls.

Poring over exit polls and field reports, Bush's aides in Arlington, Virginia, identified low-turnout precincts and dispatched more walkers to them. In Boston, advisers gave Kerry a longer-than-expected list of TV interviews to conduct by satellite to Wisconsin, Minnesota, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada and Oregon.

Kerry's aides also tried to boost turnout in Hispanic areas by having the candidate's wife, Teresa Heinz Kerry, do Spanish-language television interviews. Exit polls showed the Democrat winning the Hispanic vote, but not by as much as Gore in 2000.

2004 NOT

From Page 1

their best option."

Sarah White, 18, a North Palm Beach high school student in Florida who was excited about voting for the first time, went for Bush, saying, "I agree with a lot of what he stands for."

Jay Strell, a spokesman for Rock the

Vote, a campaign targeting 18- to 25-year-olds, said the voter turnout among young people was impressive this year.

"The issues at stake in this election - the war in Iraq, the prospect, however remote, of a draft, the economy - are all reasons more young people came out to vote this election," he said. "They are clearly being more impacted by the issues at stake in this election."

Chamber re-elects Sablan for another term

Direct Saipan-Taiwan flight takes off in maiden voyage







Environment

ARC

Life & Style

See ANNETTE on Page 20

joint anniversary obit

wallace

Muhammad Ali poses for pictures at center

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP)—Muhammad Ali posed for pictures, gave out hugs and performed magic tricks for about 150 people who turned out for a “topping out” ceremony at the downtown center named for him.

The event was to mark reaching the center’s highest point. As part of Monday’s ceremony, a large crane was to hoist the highest beam into place on the steel frame of the six-story Muhammad Ali Center. But rain kept that from happening, and the beam was lifted only a few feet off the ground.

The \$34.5 million, 93,000-square-foot center is scheduled to open Nov. 19, 2005. It will include 24,000 square feet of exhibits, featuring six themed pavilions. Each will focus on a different trait of the former heavyweight boxing champion.

Lonnie Ali, Ali’s wife, said the Alis are committed to the center “becoming a global gathering place, where individuals not only have a platform for ironing out their differences, but a place” to motivate visitors to strive.

The Ali Institute, based at the



Boxing legend Muhammad poses at the Boys & Girls Clubs of America annual President's dinner on June 9, 2004 in New York.

University of Louisville, plans to hold seminars and other events at the center to promote peacemak-

ing and conflict resolution.

Officials also announced new contributions to the project of

\$2 million, which match an anonymous donor's grant for a total of \$4 million.

Cosby creates scholarship for UMass

AMHERST, Mass. (AP)—The University of Massachusetts has entertainer Bill Cosby—one of its most famous graduates—to thank for helping raise \$1.5 million for a new program aimed at giving scholarships to students from the poorer communities around the university.

A bulk of the money comes from a benefit concert that Cosby gave at his alma mater Friday.

Ticket sales and the price of admission to a pre-performance dinner generated \$444,000, and university officials say individu-

als have contributed \$541,000 to the Amherst campus for new scholarship funds. The state is matching the contribution with about \$383,000, officials said. A \$340,000 chunk was raised from Cosby's performance.

Chancellor John Lombardi said the first scholarships will go to students in Springfield and Holyoke schools that already have partnership agreements with the university.

If the program is successful, it will be open to students from other poorer communities in the region, he said.

“We want to say this is a place that reaches out to people living in depressed areas,” Cosby said. “That this university has open arms for all Americans as a state school should.”

Cosby said his hope is that students selected for the awards would teach in schools in economically depressed areas for at least two years after their graduation.

The entertainer, who has a home in Shelburne, received a master's degree and doctorate in education from the university in the 1970s.

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

Lil' Kim to talk to Syracuse students

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (AP)—Syracuse University students taking “Hip-Hop Eshu: Queen B@ \$H101—The Life and Times of Lil' Kim” will have a guest speaker Wednesday—the multi-platinum recording artist herself.

Kim accepted an invitation to speak to the class, which is an accredited course being taught by English professor Greg Thomas. She'll also meet with faculty and about 100 other invited students during her visit to discuss her role in the hip-hop culture and her experiences as one of its leading female stars.

“I am honored and quite proud that a class is being taught on my sensationalist lyrics, unique style and fashion and leadership role within the hip-hop community,” the 29-year-old rapper said in a statement.

The class is one of a growing number of courses being offered

by colleges and universities around the country that look at the growth of hip-hop as a cultural movement.

Singer Brandy looking for new record label

NEW YORK (AP)—Brandy is looking for a new record label. Brandy, 25, split from her long-time label, Atlantic Records, her publicist, Courtney Barnes, announced Monday. The departure came after relatively disappointing sales of her last album, “Afrodisiac.” Although the album generated the moderate hit “Talk About Our Love” with Kanye West, it disappeared quickly from the charts.

It was a departure from her previous three albums, all of which sold at least 1 million copies.

Barnes says Brandy is looking at other labels and also plans to be co-executive producer of a comedy series for Fox television next year.

Tim McGraw owner of Arena football team

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Tim McGraw plays a former high-school football player in the movie, “Friday Night Lights,” and now he's become a part owner of the Arena Football League's Nashville Kats.

Bud Adams, owner of the NFL's Tennessee Titans, announced Monday that McGraw had joined him and Mark Bloom as co-owners of the franchise that Adams revived after the team moved to Atlanta.

“I'm part of the community here—loving football, being part of the community and wanting to support anything that helps this community out,” the country singer said at a news conference.

McGraw, whose latest album is “Live Like You Were Dying,” will be doing his part to boost attendance by performing for Kats' season ticket holders and sponsors next year.

True friends stick together through all of life's changes

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: I read your column faithfully. The letter from “Devoted Mom in Livermore, Calif.” really touched a nerve with me. She said she wanted to end friendships with her old “career” friends because she no longer had anything in common with them and would rather spend her free time with her husband and daughter. How sad.

People use the word “friends” too liberally. I believe a person is truly blessed if he or she can name five “true friends.” By that I mean people who will be by your side through thick and thin; back you up and ask questions later; someone you can call any time of day or night. Through childhood, marriage, children, divorce, whatever life throws your way, these friends are there. The common thread is the quality that made you friends to begin with. You may not see each other often, but when you pick up that phone or e-mail, it's like you never left off.

It's a shame “Devoted Mom” doesn't understand that true meaning of friendship.



Dear Abby

KATHY G., BALLY, PA.

DEAR KATHY: I agree. True friendship is a commodity so precious it should not be discarded lightly. That letter brought in some interesting mail. Read on for a sample:

DEAR ABBY: Although “Devoted Mom” didn't say it in so many words, her letter smacked of the attitude that I'm willing to bet used to disgust her. Now that she's settled down, she's eager to phase out her single girlfriends. Naturally, since she has a “real” life now, she doesn't want to be around people who don't, and certainly she and all her mommy-track friends are sure that anything remotely different from their existence is entirely false. It's that very attitude that keeps us divided.

Sure, she's tired of hearing about single girls' money and boyfriend problems, but let me assure her that potty training doesn't exactly make for a riveting anecdote. Single lives are no less valuable and real than hers.

“Devoted Mom” shouldn't worry about letting those women down easily. They may not be eager to be around someone with such a smug-minded attitude anyway.

WOMAN-POSITIVE IN COLUMBUS, OHIO

DEAR WOMAN-POSITIVE: I'm sure they won't when they find out they're expendable!

DEAR ABBY: I agree with your advice about thinking twice before phasing out her older relationships. Tomorrow her life could be turned upside down, and those things that she cherishes and enjoys now might not be there—O- including her spouse, child and “new mommy” friends. Wouldn't it be nice to know that you still have those relationships and the support of those friends? The complaints she's hearing from them now were very likely some of hers in the past. Were I her, I might try to change the tone of the relationships, but in no way would I eliminate them.

KRISTIN K., NEW CITY, N.Y.

DEAR KRISTIN: That's mature thinking. A reader in Minnesota sent me the following, and its message rings true: “Make new friends, but keep the old/The worth of true friendship exceeds that of gold.”

FROM MY COLLECTION OF LIMERICKS:

A wonderful bird is the pelican
His beak holds more than his belican
He can hold in his beak
Enough food for a week
I don't see how in the helican.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To order “How to Write Letters for All Occasions,” send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Marvel sues Disney over comic rights

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Comic superhero stable Marvel Enterprises Inc. has sued The Walt Disney Co., claiming the entertainment giant never had legal rights to make animated television programs based on comic book characters such as “Spider-Man” and “X-Men.”

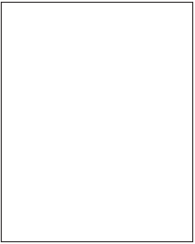
In the suit, filed Friday in U.S. District Court, Marvel accuses Disney of copyright infringement, fraud and unfair competition stemming from Disney's distribution of animated episodes of Marvel characters.

“Disney does not have the right to distribute and profit from Marvel's animated programming,” the suit states. “Disney's continued telecasts over the ABC Family Channel and its other acts of exploitation infringe Marvel's copyrights.”

New York-based Marvel said it entered into exclusive licensing agreements with companies that were eventually acquired by Disney, but never directly extended those rights to create or distribute programs based on Marvel characters to Disney.

Under copyright law, Disney needed to obtain written consent from Marvel before taking over rights originally licensed to the other companies, the suit contends.

Pastimes

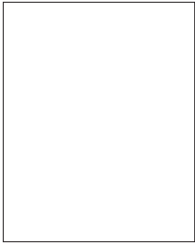


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SAIPAN TRIBUNE